

*Arja Jokinen & Eero Suoninen*

## FROM CRIME TO RESOURCE

*Constructing Narratives in a Social Work Encounter*

In this article we will be looking at social work via its everyday practices, and the assumption we make is that it is through these practices that social work is accomplished as what it is.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most important of these everyday practices are those which exist in the encounter between the social worker and the client. This is the focus of our study in the context of this particular work; the social work encounter, which in spite of its importance has only recently begun to attract the attention it deserves in Finnish research.

One way to approach the encounter between the social worker and the client is to look at it as a process geared towards change in the client's life. However, it is extremely difficult to uncover this process by means of scientific research. In this article we will be examining one such process in great detail. On the basis of our analysis we will attempt to show how the narratives that are constructed in the interaction between the social worker and the client, the "stories" about the client's life, can engender the potential for change. The seeds of change lie hidden within the narratives; the power that causes them to shoot forth lies not only in the narratives helping the client to explain and understand what he has done in the past, but also in their opening up different horizons for his agency in the future. Empirically, our analysis is set in the context of social work within the probation office

(probation and after care service). However, we are convinced that the idea of the construction of narratives is applicable to the analysis of social work encounters in general.

### The construction of meanings in interaction

One of the most important tools in the professional encounter is conversation, a process of dialogue aimed at producing an interpretation of the client's situation. The theoretical framework we apply in our attempt to come to grips with this element of interpretation is social constructionism. Social constructionism is concerned first and foremost with language use; the assumption is that oral and written language, speaking and writing, are processes in which social reality is actively shaped (see Gergen 1994; Shotter 1993; Burr 1995). Language use is not studied as a simple mirrored reflection of reality. Rather, the analytical interest centres on how language use itself creates reality, and on how people work together to construct mutual understanding, interpret experiences, and identify and label different things. Social reality cannot be broken down into meanings in a simple and straightforward manner, and there is always the possibility of diverse interpretations. It is for this reason that it is important to focus on those processes of interaction in which meanings are selected, shaped and transformed.

Applied to the study of social work, the ideas of social constructionism imply that linguistic practices are conceptualised as interpretations of social reality and the construction of meanings (see e.g. Jokinen, Juhila & Pösö 1995 and forthcoming; Holstein & Miller 1993 and Miller & Holstein 1991 and 1993; Payne forthcoming). Through a detailed analysis of language use, our intention here is to present an interpretation of those practices of social work in which social workers accomplish their institutional duties, meet their clients and try to help change their lives. Our choice to focus on language use does not mean that we deny the importance of non-linguistic actions in social work. It is important to recognise that practical measures are also related in many different ways to language use. For instance, the way in which an application for income support is processed and the decision reached will depend in large part on how the discussion between the parties involved proceeds (Rostila 1997; Cedersund forthcoming). Similarly, the

establishment or termination of a client relationship in a social welfare organisation is interwoven in various ways with the discussions that social workers conduct amongst themselves or with clients (Jokinen 1995; Juhila 1995; Jokinen & Juhila 1997). Various (involuntary) measures (such as taking an individual into care, or placement in a reformatory school) are always preceded by diverse linguistic processes of definition, and the decisions taken must be legitimised in linguistic terms (Pösö 1993; Heino 1997).

In Finland, recent studies on face-to-face encounters between social workers and clients have applied three different methodological perspectives, all of which are of interest to our orientation here. They are the perspectives of ethnography (Forsberg 1998; Eräsaari 1995), conversation analysis (Rostila 1997) and discourse analysis (Jaatinen 1996; Jokinen 1995). As opposed to viewing social work encounters from the vantage-point of a given "explanatory" theory, all of these approaches share a common interest in everyday work practices, and particularly in how they are perceived and understood by the actors themselves. In ethnographic analysis, the aim is most typically to attempt to identify the interpretation resources employed by actors on the basis of observation materials (Miller 1997). Conversation analysis, for its part, uses detailed transcriptions of tape-recorded conversations to uncover recurring patterns in interaction (Heritage 1997; Hakulinen 1997; Psathas 1995). The method of discourse analysis that we apply in this study shares the same interest as ethnography with regard to how meanings evolve and take shape, although the material consists of transcriptions of tape-recorded conversations as in conversation analysis (Edwards 1997; Jokinen & Juhila 1996; Suoninen 1993 and 1997a; Potter 1997).

Here, the material on which our analysis is based comes from two meetings between a female social worker in the probation office and a young male client of hers. The first meeting lasts about an hour, the second about half an hour. The meetings have been tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim, in an attempt to retain all of the nuances that are distinctive of verbal interaction.<sup>2</sup> The case material has been selected from a corpus of ten transcriptions on the basis of its potential to demonstrate how the meaning resources available to the client can be fundamentally transformed in a social work encounter. The main concern in our analysis is the question of what is possible; the prevalence

and frequency of the phenomenon we are examining must be addressed in (further) research that operates with larger data sets.

## The role of narratives in the analysis of meanings

In the process in which individuals reflect upon their pasts (which is often expected of clients in social work), they often do so by constructing "stories" or narratives of past events. Narratives can be approached as interpretative accounts in which meanings are assigned to different events, and in which those events are set out along a temporal dimension. Narratives provide accounts of the causes and consequences of events, highlight the goals and the tensions inherent in different actions, expound the positions of actors, social relationships and contexts (Edwards 1997, 263-270). Our analysis is not based on any particular narrative theory, but we employ the methods of discourse analysis that leans heavily on its primary material. Since our material consists of an actual discussion, and since we are interested in what is produced in that discussion, it is impossible for us to apply any rigid definitions of the term narrative. For us, the narrative is a fairly broad and loose analytical concept which assumes a more specific content both in and through the process of empirical analysis (cf. Edwards 1997, 264-276).

Although narratives provide accounts of past events and experiences, we are not interested in whether the story is true or false; reality does not normally break down into meanings or accounts in any simple, straightforward fashion. It is possible to give many different accounts of the same event, without any one of them being less "real" than another. The key thing we have to realise is that narratives are always real in the sense that they are produced into existence in a specific situation and that they are used to produce certain social consequences (Edwards 1997, 269-270). It can be said then that narratives have different contextual functions, such as justifying one's own actions, representing someone else's actions in a dubious light, or emphasising changes that have occurred within oneself. In other words, although narratives must have some point of contact with the past, they are always constructed out of the present. This implies that various contextual factors (such as the institutional context, other discus-

sants or each phase of the discussion) have a major impact on how the past is constructed at each point in time (cf. Middleton & Edwards 1990).

It is interesting (and directly relevant to the case of social work) that narratives not only help to explain and understand past events, but they also open up visions of the future: it is as if they provide clues about a bigger picture than they are explicitly describing.<sup>3</sup> For instance, individual words do not have the same sort of power as words that are grouped into narratives. It is also possible to project oneself into narratives which offer interpretations of one's experiences, particularly when they involve morally loaded roles such as "hero", "victim" or "villain". In this sense, the simple concept of narrative could be replaced by the concept of "lived narratives", a term which Kenneth Gergen (1994, 230) uses to stress the way in which expressions of emotion assume their meaning as parts of different kinds of narratives. Another closely related concept is that of "storied lives" (Rosenwald and Ochberg 1992, quoted in Hyvärinen 1998, 329), which refers to the fact that people construct narratives in order to "live them in the future". This potential of narratives has particularly important implications for social work: it offers the possibility of establishing new narratives, which can open up a broader horizon of future prospects that are worth living for (cf. Riikonen & Smith 1997, 13-17; McLeod 1997, 112-113; Gergen & Kaye 1994, 172-175).

In contrast to the line of structuralism which looks at narratives as broad and totally discursive formations, here, we will be examining narratives as locally produced interactive processes. This strategic choice allows us to highlight the key role of interaction in the production of narratives.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, it also means that we will not be looking at social work practices as manifestations of any grand narrative (such as the welfare state or the discipline society narrative) (cf. Hall 1997, 14-16). Rather, our main concern is with how narratives are constructed *in situ*, in the context of human interaction.<sup>5</sup> Also, our analysis of narratives does not apply any given scheme, such as an analyst applying Labov's (1972) classification would do. We feel that any attempt to slot human action into given categories runs the risk of losing sight of the specificity of each particular case (see Edwards 1997, 276; White forthcoming). It is also noteworthy that in the fast-moving train of interaction, narratives are rarely as clearly constructed into clear-cut entities

as in the case of a written text, which means that their interpretation also requires a more sensitive approach (cf. Riessman 1993, 17-18).

The method we use in this study requires that we focus our attention on the details of the interactive episode. The baseline assumption is that not only words, but also other means of communication, such as pauses, tones of voice, false starts, volume, intonation, laughter, crying and hesitation, all play an important part in the construction of meanings and in maintaining communicative interaction (see e.g. Suoninen forthcoming; Silverman 1997, 27).<sup>6</sup> Turns of talk and the shared understanding based on turn-taking are ultimately constructed locally, which means that it is also important to examine how the parties to the conversation receive and interpret the contents of different turns, and also how they react to them at various points during the course of the conversation. Negotiation about meanings is always a joint action involving all the parties to the conversation (cf. Shotter 1993).

## Context and the research problem

Our material was recorded in the following context: A young, 19-year-old male client enters the office of a social worker in the probation office. He will be tried in three weeks' time for an assault in connection with a violent dispute between two groups of youths just over six months ago. The young man has been invited to an interview with the social worker, the purpose of which is to prepare an assessment of the client's suitability to community service for the court.<sup>7</sup> Community service is an alternative to an unconditional custodial sentence, in which the convicted party expiates the offence by unpaid work for good causes. Also, since the client is defined as a young offender, the social worker is required to prepare a personal history report for the court.<sup>8</sup>

The social worker has a structured form for collecting the information she needs for the assessment and for the personal history report. For the assessment of whether or not the client is suitable for community service, data is collected, for example, on his financial situation, social relations, leisure interests, substance use and education. The assessment interview typically involves the social worker asking questions of the client, leading the discussion into areas specified in the form, while she is simultaneously expected to inform the client about

the various aspects of community service. In other words, the conversation uses both the “interview format” and the “information delivery format” (Peräkylä & Silverman 1991 and Silverman 1997, 41-60). The themes covered in the personal history form are very similar, but the accent is more clearly on background data that is relevant to the “determination of appropriate sanctions”.

In short then, our case is a situation of institutional interaction in which the two parties meet in order to accomplish certain tasks (see Peräkylä 1997; Drew & Heritage 1992). In this case, the institutional task is to carry out interviews for an assessment report and a personal history report. The institutional context impacts the interaction in another way as well. The two parties do not face each other on equal terms, because the social worker has powers vested in her by the institution to make an assessment as to whether or not the client is a suitable candidate for community service, and to suggest an appropriate sanction to the court. Furthermore, the social worker represents a certain profession within the organisation concerned, and that organisation operates under certain rules of professional ethics, as well as societal and organisational expectations. All of these factors are woven into the interaction, but not in any pre-determined manner because human action is not directly steered by rules. One of the reasons for this is that rules are designed to provide general guidelines, but individual actors have to apply and interpret them separately in each specific situation (Edwards 1997, 5-18). Moreover, different sets of rules may conflict with one another (Suoninen 1997b). In the context of probation work, tensions may be caused, for instance, by the requirement of fitting together the task of punishment and the professional ethics of social work. It is also important to stress that the face-to-face interaction that occurs in the “here and now” constructs a specific, unpredictable event out of each encounter. Despite the fact that the task and themes of the conversation may be provided in advance, it is possible that diverse and even surprising perspectives may appear.

The task for this research is to analyse the interactive construction of narratives in which the relationship to the criminal offence, to the act for which the offender is charged, is redefined in a new way. Our interest is focused particularly on how different actor positions, and specifically the client's agency, are constructed in each narrative. This is because the client's agency and related questions about ethics and responsibility can in many ways

be regarded as key issues of social work.

In the early stages of the analysis our strategy is to bracket out as far as possible our preconceptions and to look at the material with an open mind: we want to see beyond what we assume we already know (cf. Silverman 1997, 34). Later on, however, we will link our interpretation to its institutional context, and address questions regarding expertise and the exercise of power in social work on the basis of our analysis. This kind of approach, which leans heavily on its original source material, requires that the report demonstrates to the reader exactly how we have arrived at our conclusions. It is for this reason that our article includes quite extensive extracts from the material.

## Victim narrative

The first of the four narratives we identify in the material begins to unfold at the very beginning of the meeting, which is reproduced in extract one. In these extracts we have used certain codes to try and preserve various nuances of the conversation.<sup>9</sup> S refers to social worker and C to client. To make it easier to follow the conversation, we have written the social worker's turns in italics, the client's turns in normal typeface. Arrows have been inserted on those lines which are the most directly relevant to the analysis.

### Extract 1: Construction of victim position

- 1 S: *Yes so about this community service if it's about there's the, (.) there's*  
 2 *your criminal record*  
 3 C: Mmm.  
 4 S: *Mm (.) .hh So there's one suspended. (3) um. Erm [erm ne-*  
 5 C: [Yes.  
 6 S: → *uh uh di- did you read the brochure that uh, (1)*  
 7 C: No.  
 8 S: [Aha  
 9 C: → [No. I was so pissed off with this fucking thing that  
 10 th[at when  
 11 S: [Were you.  
 12 (.)

- 13 C: Yeah I couldn't be bothered with it.  
 14 (.)  
 15 S: *Huh.*  
 16 C: Well I mean that uhm (1) that originally the the thing was this that, (.) when  
 17 I was still in hospital.  
 18 S: *Yes.*  
 19 C: → That like I mean I'm like the victim in this thing.  
 20 (.)  
 21 S: [*Yeab.*  
 22 C: [Yeah 'cos, (.)  
 23 S: *Yea/b.*  
 24 C: [And like for me the thing was like this that, (.) I mean, (.) that we they,  
 25 (.) first of all we didn't even start the whole fight.

Early on in this episode (on line 6), the social worker asks the client a question that is typical in the opening of an assessment interview. She asks him if he had read the brochure on community service that had been sent to him in the post. However, in this case the question fails to open the usual agenda which would lead to a discussion on the contents of the information package. Rather than entering into a discussion on what he knows about community service or listening to what the social worker has to say, the client sets out to offer a very emotional interpretation of the events that led to his being charged (especially lines 9 and 19). The social worker raises no objection to this change of agenda. Although her response on line 15, an emphatic "Huh", can be interpreted as a mildly critical expression (as if she were saying "why on earth not?"), it still leaves the door open for the client to proceed to the position of a narrator providing an explanation. Following this extract, the discussion goes on to include a long, detailed and emotional review of the events leading up to his being charged with the assault. The social worker clearly assumes the position of listener, intervening only with the occasional solicitation for more specific information.

In the course of this episode (of which extract 1 is only a small part), the client produces himself as a victim of what had happened rather than as a criminal offender. By taking the position of victim the client does not appear as an active agent in the story, but contrarily as a passive object in a string of events which took their own course. The brawl becomes explicated as an event in which the client's own choices were irrelevant, particularly since he was not on the side that started it

all. The "villain" in the story is quite unequivocally the other party in the brawl, those who started it. The structure of alliances is very clearly bipolar; "we" are innocent and "they" are guilty.

The narrative constructed in this episode is clearly initiated and pursued by the client. The client "lives" this narrative very emotionally, and repeats it several times later on in the discussion. The social worker neither lends her support to this narrative nor suppresses it. Instead, she tries on several occasions to shift the focus away from a graphic and detailed account of the events, toward uncovering the motives and causes of what happened. She asks the client: Why did you get involved? What exactly were you thinking? What was the purpose of the whole thing? Eventually, after a whole string of such questions, the client's black-and-white story begins to crumble, and eventually admits that perhaps he was not "completely innocent" himself. However, at this point there is no serious deliberation of his role in the course of events.

## Realisation narrative

There is a very clear turning-point in the discussion some 15 minutes after the initiation of the interview, when the social worker poses a question which is temporally distant from the event. "This kind of thing" on line 1 refers to the brawl that has been discussed at some length prior to this extract:

### Extract 2a: From rough experience into resource

- 1 S: → .hh Well what do you think about this kind of thing that  
 2 six, (.) six months on and ubh, (.)  
 3 C: Well, (.)  
 4 S: About [*the whole*,  
 5 C: [.mhhh ((sniffs)) (.)  
 6 S: [*Fracas*  
 7 C: → [I don't know, (.) I feel that like perhaps I needed  
 8 this, (.) system, (.) anyway, (.) I mean: what I need is that, (.)  
 9 S: *Right.*  
 10 C: That I've been, (.) I was stabbed and that like stopped me and made me  
 11 think, (.) [like really about these things more

- 12 S: [Right.  
 13 C: seriously and uhm, (.)  
 14 S: Righ-ht.  
 15 C: So that afterwards, (.) things were going pretty well, (.) six weeks like I  
 16 mean I lived at my dad's place and, (.)  
 17 S: Right.  
 18 C: I spent a lot of time alone and I did everything went running and  
 19 like walking and (.)  
 20 S: Was that before or af[ter].  
 21 C: [After ri[ght after.  
 22 S: [Yes [right.  
 23 C: [When I was recovering  
 24 so I couldn't really do anything anyway.  
 25 S: Yeab.  
 26 (.)  
 27 C: And uhm, (.) this was a really good time for me and then when I  
 28 went to the army uhm, (.)  
 29 S: Mm.  
 30 C: It's been like really a good time for me that,  
 31 S: Yes right.  
 32 C: Yeah I mean like, (1) that, (1) it was like on midsummers the last  
 33 time like I haven't even been doing dope.  
 34 S: Yeab.  
 35 C: Like [that I was, (.) in general like, (.)  
 36 S: [Okay.  
 37 S: Yeab.  
 38 C: And I've had very little to drink of course 'cos I've been in the  
 39 army now, (.) [so I mean last weekend I was  
 40 S: [Right,  
 41 C: sober and, (.)  
 42 S: Ye[a:b.  
 43 C: [Now I've been, (.)  
 44 [like that and I don't know if I'm going to have  
 45 S: [Right.  
 46 C: any this weekend either.  
 47 S: Yea:b, yea:b.  
 48 C: So [that,  
 49 S: -> [So what did you like, (.) what did you start thinking,  
 50 C: Well I suppose I started thinking that anyway because, (.) it's the same  
 51 chance it could have been five inches higher then, (.) with  
 52 [the knife up here it then

- 53 S: [Right.  
 54 C: it could have been, (.) it. Or I [mean dead.  
 55 S: [Right.  
 56 S: Yeab [so that,  
 57 C: [Yeah so I started like thinking that is there really like  
 58 any point in this sort of fucking mess, (.) is it really worth me, (.)  
 59 risking (others then) my life, so, (.) I [mean like.  
 60 S: [Absolutely.  
 61 S: Mm.  
 62 (.)  
 63 C: So it's not like, (.) I think it makes no sense.  
 64 S: Mm. Exactly.

The impetus for the new narrative is provided by the social worker's question in which she invites the client to assess the past event from the vantage-point of the present. Whereas as in the victim narrative the client was "pissed off" with the whole "fucking thing", here the client sets out to construct an interpretation of an experience that was necessary for him (lines 7-8): "it like stopped me and made me think" (lines 10-11). The event is now beginning to unfold as a realisation narrative in which a useful lesson leads to a deeper understanding of things. One part of this narrative is reflection on one's own actions; or as the client puts it, "thinking about things".

In this episode, the social worker assumes the position of a listener who provides active encouragement through affirmative feedback: "yeah, yeah", "absolutely", "exactly". In this respect the social worker's role is clearly different from that in extract 1, in which her feedback tended to be more restrained, including the surprised "huh". Now, the social worker is also providing encouraging feedback through overlapping speech. This clearly serves the purpose of indicating that, as far as she is concerned, the client is now on the right track. Her encouragement toward self-reflection is explicitly visible when she asks the client (on line 49) "what did you start thinking". In his response, the client says that he had thought about whether there was "any point" in getting involved in "this sort of fucking mess", and concluded that there was not. A responsible actor is beginning to emerge in the responses; an actor who assumes responsibility for himself and for others.

The client weaves this realisation narrative into a broader context of the general development of his life, which he sees as moving in a more positive direction since the event: “I spent a lot of time alone and I did everything went running and like walking”, “I haven’t even been doing dope”, “last weekend I was sober”.

The client proceeds even further with this exercise of self-reflection in the next extract, which follows on directly after extract 2a.

*Extract 2b: Towards a deeper self-understanding*

- 1 S: → *Mm. .bbb Well what in your opinion was the cause of these, (1) brawls then.*  
 2 (3)  
 3 C: (Like for example,)  
 4 S: → *Generally like. (.) .bb, (.) They [come (today and bb,)*  
 5 C: [Well, (.) hhh  
 6 C: → There’s it’s there are so many that, (.) I mean there’s, (.) many  
 7 different reasons. [mhhh ((sniffs))  
 8 S: [Right.  
 9 C: At least like erm, (.) I have this that, (.) the reason I like get involved in  
 10 these things is that,  
 11 S: Right,  
 12 C: A is this king alcohol.  
 13 S: Rig[ht.  
 14 C: [I’d never ever get involved in this sort of thing sober.  
 15 S: Right. Yes.  
 16 C: Then b, there’s, (.) this sort of (.) feeling of frustration, (.) that  
 17 [you’re left with.  
 18 S: [Right.  
 19 (.)  
 20 C: When there’s no real content.  
 21 S: Right.  
 22 C: And then, (.) cor- depression.  
 23 S: Right.  
 24 C: So it’s, (.) it’s like all of them together that they, (.) trigger this thing  
 25 that all you need is a small little thing then, (1) it’s like completely,  
 26 S: *So it’s a bit like you like to want a [change or.*  
 27 C: [Mm. Couldn’t care less. Yeah.  
 28 S: Mm.  
 29 (.)  
 30 S: Yeah.

- 31 (1)  
 32 S: *So that yeah.*  
 33 (2)  
 34 S: *Mm. mm.*  
 35 (1.5)  
 36 S: → *A bit sort of self-destructive [or [like*  
 37 C: → [Yeah.[that’s  
 38 what (.) my behaviour’s been like for many years.  
 39 S: Right[:.  
 40 C: [I mean really like, (.)  
 41 S: A-ba.  
 42 C: I mean, (1.5) right up here all my arms are all, (.) full of scars and  
 43 generally,  
 44 (.)  
 45 S: Right.  
 46 C: With cars as well, (.) I’ve messed around and, (.) had accidents and all  
 47 sorts, (.) I mean it’s been like that for many years the behaviour  
 48 that like, (.)  
 49 S: Right.  
 50 C: → So it’s almost like you know, (.) like wanting to get killed.

The social worker’s question on line 1 concerning the reasons for the brawls triggers a sequence from line 6 where the client begins to consider the reasons for his behaviour. Again, the social worker’s contribution is not confined to the explicit questions she asks. It is particularly interesting to notice the delicate caution (cf. Suoninen forthcoming) with which she tones down her words so that they are easier for the client to absorb and accept. On line 36, where she offers an interpretation of the client’s behaviour, she does not put her views bluntly by saying “so yours has been a form of self-destructive behaviour”, rather, they are carefully suggestive for an interpretation: “A bit sort of self-destructive or like”. This same kind of caution is also seen on line 26, where the social worker re-formulates the client’s description by saying: “So it’s a bit like you want a change”.

In the exchanges in extracts 2a and 2b, the client is no longer externalising the event (or any other similar events in which he has been involved) as having occurred independently of himself, but he now begins to “live” as an actor. It is not only the actor positions, but also the alliance positions that are changed here. Whereas in the victim narrative the client still strongly identified himself with his mates, in the

realisation narrative the self is no longer located as part of “us”. At the same time, the dichotomy between us and them collapses, and the individual (i.e. the client himself) emerges as a central actor. To simplify, the change implies that “doing well” is closely associated with being alone, whereas the “stupid stuff” is located specifically as part of the actions of the gang. Indeed, this gang is now beginning to take shape as a threat rather than a resource. On the other hand, the event itself is becoming transformed into a resource in the client’s talk; it stopped him, forced him to change direction. This kind of change was inspired most particularly by the social worker’s question at the beginning of extract 2a, which made it possible for the client to assess what had happened without any threat of losing face. He was able to do this by locating his mistakes as part of the past (or his “past self”), which he was then able to analyse from a distance, without posing any threat to his current self. The critical evaluation of the “past self”, viewed in contrast with the “changed self”, actually provides useful tools for the construction of a new, positive kind of agency (cf. Juhila 1994). In other words, the impetus for the narrative was provided by the social worker, and during the course of the discussion the social worker gave strong support to its development through encouraging responses, and through soliciting further information.

## Peace-builder narrative

During the first meeting, the client still produces one narrative which further reinforces his agency. This narrative is also initially prompted by a question asked by the social worker.

### Extract 3: Imaginary but concrete peace-building

- 1 S: → .hh Well what would happen if you had, (.) a similar situation.  
 2 (.)  
 3 S: → Today again and then you like, .hhh uhm with these mates of yours in  
 4 this bar you’d come out and then uhm, (.) what happens is that, (.)  
 5 Niko, (.) he asks for a lift ask or ((two previous words whispered)) asks  
 6 for a lift and then he, (.) he jumps, (.) out (.)  
 7 C: → I suppose I’d got over and calm things down I think that, (.) that,

- 8 (.) when like this thing when it happened, (.) I’m sure that’s what I  
 9 wanted to do. ‘Cos I had some sort of like, (.) some sort of, (.) li- hh  
 10 anyway this, (.)  
 11 S: Mm.  
 12 C: Make and, (.)  
 13 S: Mm.  
 14 (.)  
 15 C: Make and Niko they, (.) they’re like in Turku they’re in like a pretty to-, (.)  
 16 I mean like tough, (.)  
 17 S: Right.  
 18 C: Gang and I’ve now been, (.) living e sewhere I’ve like, (.) a bit  
 19 had less to do with them and [now I haven’t really had anything to  
 20 S: [Yeah,  
 21 C: do with them, (.) since I’ve been in the army I haven’t even seen Niko.  
 22 S: Yeah right.  
 23 C: And uhm, (.) I suppose there’s sort of a kind of wanting to show  
 24 off that I don’t, (.)  
 25 S: Ye[ah.  
 26 C: [That’s Pave he’s still real sharp, (.)  
 27 S: Right.  
 28 C: That like he [hasn’t,  
 29 S: [Yeah to them [right Ma[ke and Niko right.  
 30 C: [Yeah right, [Right.  
 31 C: Yeah so that like, (.) [I just couldn’t  
 32 S: [( )  
 33 C: go in there, (.) and stop it even if I wanted to like stop this  
 34 unnecessary, (.)  
 35 S: Mm. Be[cause you’re quite a bit bigger than [these  
 36 C: [( ) [Right  
 37 S: Two other lads that,  
 38 C: Mm.  
 39 S: Mm.  
 40 (1)  
 41 S: → I mean you could probably just with your presence, (.) even calm them, (.)  
 42 C: Ye[ah.  
 43 S: [Like these situations, (.) mm.  
 44 C: → I mean it could have been done differer t, (.) I mean I’m sure like I know  
 45 that, (.) that that like in this situation even though I like, (.) I was  
 46 there in the end I st-, (.) well I don’t know whether it would any  
 47 more at that stage but at the point where there were two of them  
 48 and three of us in the beginning, (.)



- 49 S: *Right*  
 50 C: → I could have- if I'd done the right thing the whole, (.) thing could  
 51 have, (.) been avoided. (.)  
 52 S: → *So [how,*  
 53 C: [I mean I believe I could have avoided them, (.)  
 54 S: → *What would you have [done.*  
 55 C: [Well I mean fuck I would have like gr-, (.) like  
 56 grabbed hold of Make or Ni[ko and said  
 57 S: [*Mm. .bbb*  
 58 C: hey we're off now that, (.) this we're leaving this fucking this right  
 59 here.  
 60 S: *Yeah [right,*  
 61 C: [That I'm sure it would have worked like that.

In a sense, this episode brings the previous conversation to full circle, reverting to the lesson that was to be learned from the story. Simultaneously, however, the episode also produces new, more concrete interpretations of how one is expected to behave in these kinds of situations. Therefore, we deal with this perspective as a separate narrative.

The social worker opens the episode by asking on line 1 what the client would now do if he were in the same situation. However, the question does not elicit an immediate response, and therefore on lines 3-6 the social worker proceeds to portray a concrete scene which corresponds to the brawl in which the client had been involved. This helps the client to project himself into the situation, through which he begins to construct a new kind of active self. Whereas in the victim narrative the client assured that he had no options but he was forced into doing what he did, this time he constructs his position in completely different terms: this time his own actions have a decisive impact on the course of events. Having initially constructed a model of imaginary action, the client eventually (on lines 50-51) draws a new conclusion about the previous, controversial events: "If I'd done the right thing the whole thing could have been avoided".

As in the previous narrative, the social worker successfully invites the client to reinforce and concretise the peace-builder narrative (on lines 52 and 54) by prompting further information: "So how?" and "What would you have done?". These direct questions have now become possible because the conversational environment has changed;

such questions no longer threaten the client's face. A major factor in this change of atmosphere is that the social worker has previously (on lines 35 and 41) stressed how the client's very presence would serve to calm things down, an assessment that the client has accepted.

In his responses, the client constructs his role and position as an actor most specifically in relation to his own mates: he would quite simply intervene and get the situation under control by appealing to his mates. Here, his hero role is constructed in terms of peace-building, not in terms of macho arrogance. At the same time, the client reflects upon his relationship to his own gang. This reflection lends further support to the interpretation formulated in the previous narrative, in which the gang was no longer necessarily an ally but rather a threat. In fact, the client says he would have wanted to act differently the last time round and stop all these things, but was not able to do so. Now, the social worker and the client are constructing a self for the client that would be capable of acting differently. The relationship to the events which have landed the client in trouble is thus reconstructed again: if only he had done the right thing the whole incident could have been avoided.

## Narrative of juridical game

The client and social worker meet a second time approximately a fortnight later. The client arrives directly from a meeting with his lawyer, in which they have been discussing the trial. The meeting with the social worker begins as follows:

### Extract 4: Juridical "value revolution"

- 1 S: *Yeah, (.) uhm, (.) bb you get round to go and see, (.)*  
 2 C: The law[yer.  
 3 S: [*The law*[yers.  
 4 C: [Yeah.  
 5 C: So [(that's)  
 6 S: [*Yeah.*  
 7 C: So that's (now) in a good shape, (.) [(this)  
 8 S: [I see.

- 9 C: these things.  
 10 (.)  
 11 S: *So what, what [did,*  
 12 C: → [I denied them [charges both of them.  
 13 S: [he say.  
 14 (.)  
 15 S: *A-ha.*  
 16 C: But uhm, (.) there's this, (.) the one I had a swing at he, (.)  
 17 [he hasn't even pressed charges.  
 18 S: [*Right,*  
 19 (.)  
 20 S: *Right[;*  
 21 C: [So he's. (.) he's one of the witnesses.  
 22 S: *Right.*  
 23 C: So that, (.) uhm two, (1) I didn't like confess, and then no one  
 24 there's no witness statements it doesn't say anywhere that this bloke  
 25 with the knife, (.) that I would have hit him at any stage, (1) it's  
 26 uhm, (.) the statement says that, (.) I held him by the lapels.  
 27 S: *Ri[ght.*  
 28 C: [But that's, (.) that's before he knifed me.  
 29 C: That (he's) [( ) (even) knifed me.  
 30 S: [*Right.*  
 31 C: → It doesn't fulfill, (.)  
 32 S: *A-b[a.*  
 33 C: [the elements of assault and, (1) so there's no other evidence  
 34 and uhm, (.)  
 35 S: *Right,*  
 36 C: Then, (.) they say that I would have, (.) smashed in the face of this  
 37 (.) rasta guy and, (.) shoved him into this, (.) roadworks pit and, (.)  
 38 the statement says that, (1) this Koskela someone, (.) a witness on  
 39 their side says that, .hhh I did it after I was stabbed.  
 40 (1.5)  
 41 C: And first of all I [couldn't have done that afterwards anyway.  
 42 S: [*Right,*

In this exchange the client's relationship to the crime is explained in a fundamentally different way than at the end of the previous meeting. Inspired by the conversation he has just had with the lawyer, the client is now looking back at what had happened from the angle of the "juridical game". The most important questions now are, what should he confess to, what exactly can he be charged for, and is there any

evidence against him. In the narrative of the juridical game, the hero is not he who critically weighs his moral values and actions, but he who knows how to play his cards right so that the sentence he receives is as lenient as possible. With the client's role and position as an actor defined from the point of view of the juridical game, the party who emerges as a natural ally for the client is his lawyer.

It is interesting to see how the social worker responds to this narrative; she allows the client to tell her the "news" without making any explicit comments.<sup>10</sup> As the discussion continues (outside the extract), she concentrates entirely on the practical sides of the legal process. At this stage she is still very careful not to take a firm stand on the moral dimensions of the issue.

## Reproduction and reinforcement of the realisation narrative

As we were listening to the tapes for the first time, we wondered how, if at all, the social worker would deal with the contradictions between the different narratives. The line that the social worker decides to pursue crystallises what we believe are key aspects of social work. The turning-point in the conversation comes in the following extract:

### Extract 5: Back to familiar values

- 1 S: *bbb And and, (.) uh .hh and here we'll have I was, (.) I like errr started hh,*  
 2 *(1.5) to think about the repo- we'll have the personal history report as an*  
 3 *appendix and then uhm .hh I like thought that u:hh, (.) I think what we could*  
 4 *say is this that uhm like what you said that, .hh that this what happened*  
 5 → *(.) .hh was like (.) that it was sort of stopped you and made you realise.*  
 6 (.)  
 7 S: *For you this, (.)*  
 8 C: M[m.  
 9 S: [*In general this thing in Ma-March tha [you had to*  
 10 C: [Mm.  
 11 S: → *that it like forced you to, (.) stop.*  
 12 (.)  
 13 C: Mm[.  
 14 S: → [*Like when you were convalescing, (1) you you had to think things*

- 15 *over, (.) and, (.) and you started*  
 16 *(.)*  
 17 C: *Mm.*  
 18 S: → *To think about it a bit differently and then this .hh ar:my like, (.)*  
 19 *actually like helped to, (.) pull it in a good direc[tion that there was*  
 20 C: *[M:.*  
 21 S: *still like .hhh this sort of avenue,(.)*  
 22 C: *That's right.*  
 23 S: → *Avenue for a sort of li-, (.) a bit like a change of direction and, (.)*  
 24 *clearly sort of different.*  
 25 C: *[M:.*  
 26 C: *Well that's what I've said [that,*  
 27 S: *[Right:.*  
 28 C: *That you know that, (.) [that my situation right now's different.*  
 29 S: *[M:.*  
 30 C: *(Just like) then.*  
 31 S: *Yeah [right.*  
 32 C: *[Very different thing.*  
 33 S: *Right.*  
 34 *(.)*  
 35 S: *Right.*  
 36 S: *And then on the other hand the army like that there you've err (.) been*  
 37 *doing well and [uhm, .hh(.*  
 38 C: *[Right,*  
 39 S: → *so that's like perhaps been good for your self-[confidence*  
 40 C: *[Yeah it has.*

In the opening turn in this extract the social worker sets out (on lines 1-5) to revive the realisation narrative that was jointly constructed during the previous meeting. It seems that she wants carefully to test whether the interpretation they negotiated the last time round is still valid, whether the client is still committed to that interpretation. The social worker raises the issue by referring to her institutional responsibilities, i.e. the reports she has to write on the basis of the meetings. This provides a good excuse for the social worker to refer to the previous interpretation of what had happened as a useful lesson. Before she proceeds to her summary (on line 5), the social worker weaves her interpretation of the client's situation into the earlier conversation and appeals explicitly to what the client had said earlier: "like what you said that."

However, the client does not immediately drop the narrative of the juridical game and revert back to the realisation narrative, so the social worker begins to reconstruct the narrative one piece at a time. The social worker proceeds through the next steps in a rather tentative fashion, yet heads very systematically in the direction she has chosen: "that it like forced you to stop" (line 11), "you had to think things over and you started to think about it" (lines 14-18), the army made possible a "change of direction" (line 23) and was "clearly different" (line 24), "good for your self-confidence" (line 39). The interpretations begin with externalising explanations and move towards action based and personal ones.

It is also interesting to see how the client's responses begin to change. On line 6, where one might expect the first response, there is nothing but a pause. At the next stage (on lines 8 and 13), the client's responses are still at a bare minimum ("mm"). Finally in the third stage, he joins the social worker as "co-producer" of the narrative (lines 22, 26, 28, 30, 32), and eventually on line 40 confirms the social worker's interpretation that his self-confidence has been strengthened. The client was eventually persuaded to begin co-producing the narrative through the point at which the past was viewed from the perspective of positive developments.

## From crime to resource: summary of the conversation process

The conversational process and the construction of narratives over the course of the two meetings between the social worker and the client can be summarised as follows. During the first meeting, the conversation shifted gradually from a victim narrative (initiated and emotionally constructed by the client) towards a realisation narrative, and finally toward a peace-builder narrative. From very early on the social worker applied delicate conversational means to convey to the client that the victim narrative is not an adequate means of explaining the events which led up to the criminal charges. The force that is concealed in the tones of the reception of the client's talk is clearly visible when we compare the reception of the victim narrative and the

realisation narrative. As soon as the client imported elements of the realisation narrative, and later of the peace-builder narrative, into the conversation, the social worker assumed the position of enthusiastic listener and inquirer, acting also to some extent as verbal co-producer. Both the discussant's tone of voice and the way in which emotional states are conveyed play a crucial role in this type of encouragement. The peace-builder narrative, which supports and complements the realisation narrative, was thus actively inspired and supported by the social worker. In fact, the realisation narrative initially emerged as an alternative to the victim narrative, in response to a question asked by the social worker, with both parties beginning to jointly produce an answer. The same holds true for the peace-builder narrative, which began to unfold through responses to questions pursued by the social worker.

At the conclusion of the initial meeting, the shared interpretation of the event was that it had, after all, been a useful lesson. It had forced the client to stop and think about things, about his own behaviour and responsibility for what had happened. What this ultimately meant is that the client had been forced to take a long, serious look at himself, and to attempt to find new directions for his future. If we assume that the position of victim locks the actor and his responsibility into one place, the transition to the realisation narrative, and further to the peace-builder narrative, can be viewed as opening up new horizons for action. In this sense, it can be said that *the process transformed the crime into a resource*.

Social relations are also constructed very differently in these three narratives. In the realisation narrative, the client's best allies are no longer his mates, but rather staff and friends in the army or even social workers, although the latter are not explicitly mentioned. Especially in the peace-builder narrative the client's mates are transformed from allies into the root causes of the problem. Whereas in the victim narrative it is heroic to defend one's mates even quite forcefully, it now begins to seem justified to defend oneself against their foolishness. This is done both by means of withdrawal (staying away from one's mates) and by building up a new actor-self in relation to other gang members (e.g. intervening to calm things down and avoiding fights; see Appendix).

The second meeting began with the client providing a very different account of the events that had taken place. In this case the most im-

portant aspect is no longer learning lessons or contemplating a change of direction, but rather playing the juridical game with a view to getting as lenient a sentence as possible. The social worker took a very practical attitude towards this narrative, making no attempt to silence the client, but simply accepting the information that he provided about his conversations with the lawyer and his decision to deny the charges. The social worker refrained from commenting on matters beyond her jurisdiction, i.e. the strategy that the lawyer and client had decided upon, and took for granted that the playing of the juridical game involves its own rules. Besides, as far as the client's future is concerned it is obviously in the best interests of social work (and the social worker) as well that he can avoid a prison sentence or get off with as lenient a sentence as possible. However, the key matter as far as social work is concerned is that the client has learned his lesson, and that he will attempt to change his behaviour in the future, thus avoiding involvement in such predicaments. Therefore, inquiring about the client's responsibility (and guilt) can be seen as a primarily pedagogic exercise. In this sense, it can be said that justice and social work are differently oriented. In social work we tend to delve into the past for reasons having to do with the future, whereas, as far as justice is concerned, delving into the past is primarily an exercise of finding out "what really happened" and of establishing juridical responsibility (cf. Potter 1996, 193-194). Indeed from the point of view of social work it is interesting that the meeting did not end in the two parties practising their strategy for the court hearing, but the social worker reverted (in a very subtle way) to the explanation that was based on the realisation narrative and eventually got the client to join in its production.

## Discussion

Social work is essentially about changing things; the people involved in social work situations are usually there because they want to create change. In the context of probation work, we have to start out with the same assumption: that the aim is to change the client's way of life and to help him steer clear of trouble. Social workers can try to accomplish this in various ways. One of the tools they have at their disposal is conversation, which typically involves the construction of diverse

interpretations of the client's life.

If we accept that narratives play a crucial part in both the construction of agency and in the justification of different actions, then the kind of narratives the clients of probation offices "live" is inherently relevant. Narratives which the client lives very emotionally can be used to justify (either to oneself or to others) a particular act. For instance, harming another person may be justified as part of a narrative in which the offender is either located in the position of an innocent victim or a hero defending his mates. Changes in narratives may therefore contain seeds of way-of-life changes. Although these seeds do not shoot forth by themselves, outside the realm of professional encounters, we contend that the kind of hero roles we are capable of living in our imagination have a much more profound impact on everyday exertions than we may be inclined to think. In the present case, for instance, the alternatives presented to the victim narrative emerged in the discussion through the joint effort of both parties and with such force that it is reasonable to assume that the client will have continued use for them as symbolic resources in his everyday life.

Since there are very few arenas in which people can fit themselves into *new kinds of hero roles*, professional encounters in social work (similarly to therapy sessions) can be immensely important for the generation of new kinds of narrative resources (cf. McLeod 1997; Gergen & Kaye 1994; Riiikonen & Smith 1997; White & Epston 1990). This is particularly true in the case of a young client standing at a cross-roads in his life. Social work encounters, even when they have no other formal purpose than to collect information for an assessment report, may thus play a significant part in the generation of new, valuable voices.<sup>11</sup>

We promised earlier that we would discuss the implications of our analysis with regard to three themes that are directly relevant to social work: institutional context, expertise and the exercise of power. First, a few words on the institutional context. An examination of our conversation process will show that the people involved are accomplishing a certain institutional task (conducting an interview for an assessment and a personal history report) within a certain institutional context (probation/social work). The social worker makes explicit reference to this task, which implies that both parties are aware of the purpose of the meeting. Another indication of the institutional task is that the social worker uses a form with a list of themes that she is

supposed to cover in the interview. She also provides the client with information regarding community service.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, it is equally justified to argue that the conversation process was very much constructed in terms of "here-and-now" interaction. The social worker opened the conversation from the horizon of the institutional task by asking whether the client had read the brochure he had been sent about community service. This question usually paves the way for a transition to information delivery, which some social workers accomplish within the interview format and others within the information delivery format. In this case, however, the conversation immediately headed in an exceptional direction, as the client "refused" to participate in this agenda. Instead, he set out to provide an emotional account of the sequence of events which had led to his being charged. It is interesting that the social worker agreed to this change of agenda.<sup>13</sup> She did not attempt to force the conversation back onto its standard track, but began to construct an alternative narrative by using elements from the client's own account and by getting the client himself to participate as co-producer. This narrative allowed for deliberation from a new and different angle both as to what had happened and why the client had behaved as he had. In a sense, one might suggest that the social worker did more in this meeting than her institutional duties, strictly speaking, entailed.<sup>14</sup>

It is our contention that the special expertise of the social worker lies in large part in the way she constructs a conversational relationship with the client, in how at certain points of the discussion she opens conversational space for the client and at others steers the discussion into new directions. It is extremely difficult to explicate this professional competence, however, because encounters always consist in flows of interaction in which (at least) two parties are involved in an unfolding process of building up a shared miniature culture. For this reason it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to provide any universal guidelines for conversational encounters.<sup>15</sup>

The context and professional expertise of social work was also reflected in the kind of meanings that the social worker favoured, opened or closed in the conversation. For instance, at the beginning of the conversation when the young male client began to produce a detailed and graphic account of the brawl, the client and the social worker took up different positions for different functions. For the young client, the

function of looking back at past events was to assure the listener of his innocence, whereas the social worker was attempting to instil a stronger sense of responsibility in the client (cf. Edwards 1997, 283). In this case the voices of change were clearly interwoven with the ethics of social work, with conceptions of right and wrong, of desirable and avoidable future developments. Indeed the same process can be examined not only as an example of the social worker's professional competence, but also as an example of the exercise of power which produces subjects (Foucault 1981 and 1982) and which is delicately interwoven in the conversational process (see also Jokinen 1995). However, power can be present in these encounters in many different ways, and we do not necessarily have to look at the exercise of power in terms of being either good or bad. It is more important to consider what power produces in each specific situation and in each network of relations.

## Appendix 1

Figure 1: Construction of agency, alliances and crime in different narratives

	<i>agency</i>	<i>alliances (ally/enemy)</i>	<i>relationship to crime</i>	<i>tension in story</i>
<i>victim narrative</i>	passive drifter	own gang/ the other gang	self victim of events (could not have done otherwise)	struggle between us innocent and them guilty
<i>realisation narrative</i>	thinking and developing self	current self/ past self	useful exper- ience and lesson	struggle between current develop- ing self and past "blunderer"
<i>peace-builder narrative</i>	active agent	me/ own gang	could have/ can be pre- vented by doing right thing	struggle between me and other members of own gang
<i>narrative of juridical game</i>	skilful player of game	me+lawyer/ court+ witnesses	crime as legal concept (evidence will decide)	struggle between my own and witnesses' accounts

## Notes

- 1 Our study forms part of a three-year (1997-1999) research project on "Institutions of Helping as Everyday Practices", financed by the Academy of Finland. We wish to thank all of our colleagues who were involved in this project for their help and support with this paper: Tarja Pösö, Kirsi Juhila, Jarl Wahlström, Katja Kurri and Timo Vottonen. Thanks also to Mirja Satka, Anssi Peräkylä, Johanna Ruusuvaara and Tapio Kuure for their useful comments.

- 2 Spoken and written language differ from each other in many respects: Spoken language tends to be less coherent than written text, and is often ungrammatical and superfluous etc. For these reasons it may seem extremely tedious to plough through detailed transcriptions of spoken interaction. However, we did not want to make either the analyst's or the reader's job too easy by excluding all of these complex elements, because we feel that they are directly relevant to our analysis (cf. Silverman 1997, 26-27, Cameron 1996, 257-258).
- 3 The emphasis on narration does not imply that we assume that all conversation between the social worker and client is narrative. Nonetheless, the points in the discussion in which the parties involved do construct a narrative are particularly relevant to our analysis.
- 4 Derek Edwards notes that narrative analysis can have three different functions: 1) narratives can be analysed in relation to the events that they describe (pictures of events); 2) the main interest is with how people understand those events (pictures of mind); and 3) the analysis can start from the action (conversation) within which the narratives are produced. This means that the focus is on discursive action. (Edwards 1997, 271-272)  
This is precisely what we are interested in within the context of this paper.
- 5 According to Edwards, narrative research has been largely based on cognitive psychology and literary narratology, which have aimed at producing generalisable categorisations and typologies of narrative structures. Consequently, less attention has been paid to how "specific story content, produced on and for occasions of talk, may perform social actions in-the-telling". (Edwards 1997, 266)
- 6 Videotapes would obviously have been useful for the analysis of aspects of non-verbal communication nuances, but this option was not available to us. However, since our main analytical interest is not with such details of interaction, but rather with the construction of meanings in the train of interaction, we feel that the audio material we have collected provides a sufficiently solid base for our analysis.
- 7 If it is the prosecutor's view that the maximum sentence for the offence in question cannot be in excess of eight months of unconditional imprisonment, he or she may request that an assessment is conducted to determine the suitability of the offender to community service.
- 8 Depending on the type of crime the age limit is 19-21 years.
- 9 Special symbols used in the extracts:
- |                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>          </u> | emphasis                           |
| (1)               | duration of pause in seconds       |
| (.)               | pause no longer than half a second |
|                   | overlapping utterance begins       |

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| . | falling intonation          |
| , | steady or rising intonation |
| : | extended or prolonged sound |

The names of places and people have been changed for anonymity.

- 10 However, the pauses on lines 14 and 41 can be read as a critical reaction, which is indeed how the client seems to interpret them, at least via the "but" on line 16.
- 11 It is not uncommon to hear people say that there is no point in trying to talk sense into young offenders. We beg to differ, however. It is quite possible that an encounter between a social worker and a client can lead to a relationship in which talking can make a difference. People's lives are composed of countless strands, and although one single strand does not in itself hold a significant amount of weight, it can be immensely important and valuable to the individual. For one person this strand might be a meeting with a social worker, for another it might be a job in a youth workshop repairing bikes and cars. It can be characterised as providing an opportunity to construct new actor positions and hero roles.
- 12 Since our concern in this article is with the transformation of narratives, the extracts shed very little light on the treatment of different themes in the discussion or on information delivery.
- 13 Taking up the position of narrator may be one such means with which the client can make his voice heard. In her analyses of consultations between doctors and patients, Johanna Ruusuvaori (forthcoming) has found that the way in which patients can occupy the arena, at least for a while, is to construct an account in narrative format in response to the doctor's question of what is troubling them.
- 14 The frame of social work/probation work, or more specifically, the recognition (or valuation) of the institutional function of community service interviews is not, however, singular and uniform, as Kirsi Juhila and Tarja Pösö have shown elsewhere in this book.
- 15 For example, in another client encounter in which the social worker used very similar questions to try and get another young male client to contemplate his actions and future, the young man refused to respond to the social worker's initiatives.

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